

Congresswoman Fighting for Funds to Complete Innovative Project

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (CA-47) announced that she has introduced a bill to help improve Orange County's access to clean, reliable sources of water. H.R. 5039 would authorize \$26 million in federal funding for the expansion of the Orange County Water District's Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS). The largest water purification project of its kind in the world, the GWRS takes highly treated wastewater and purifies it to levels that meet state and federal drinking water standards.

"Orange County is susceptible to severe water shortages due to recurring droughts and dramatic population growth," said Rep. Sanchez. "Reusing recycled wastewater is a smart strategy that has helped protect our community, and our environment, from periodic water shortages. I am proud to introduce H.R. 5039, which will help ensure Orange County's water supply is clean, safe, and secure for years to come."

"Currently, about half of Orange County's water supplies come from outside the county," Rep. Sanchez continued. "Expanding the GWRS will allow Orange County to produce its own water without the political, environmental, and legal issues that come with importing water from Northern California and the Colorado River. For the first time, our community has a chance to be truly independent – the manufacturer and consumer of its own water supplies."

"The Orange County Water District is grateful that Congresswoman Sanchez has introduced a bill to authorize funding for the expansion of the Groundwater Replenishment System," stated Michael Markus, P.E., General Manager of the Orange County Water District. "The water restrictions and shortages throughout California are having severe impacts on the state and U.S. economy and will continue to get worse if investments are not made in water infrastructure projects."

Specifically, Rep. Sanchez's bill would amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act by authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the planning and construction of the GWRS expansion. The initial GWRS project was similarly authorized and received \$20 million in federal funding to support this critical project which produces 70 million gallons per day, and 72,000 acre-feet of pure water every year – enough to meet the needs of 500,000 Orange County residents. The expansion authorized by Rep. Sanchez's bill

would increase that production capacity by 18,000 acre-feet.

Ensuring that Orange County has access to adequate water supplies is one of Rep. Sanchez's top priorities in Congress. In October 2009, she successfully secured over \$49.7 million in federal funding for local water projects, including the continuing construction of the Santa Ana River Mainstem and the ongoing Westminster-East Garden Grove watershed study on flood control. Rep. Sanchez will continue to fight for federal funding to improve drinking water and wastewater systems Orange County.

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